

Over the 4th of July holiday, I, like many of my colleagues, was able to speak with hundreds of constituents. Folks were more eager than ever to talk to me about unaffordable energy prices. And when they asked what Washington is doing to address this issue, unfortunately, I had to tell them nothing. But not because of a lack of Republican will.

Despite Democrat promises of 'common sense' plans to lower gas prices, the average price of a gallon of gas has increased by more than 76 percent since they took control of Congress.

Republicans understand that advancing America's energy security, and working to bring down gas prices, will require a comprehensive approach that promotes responsible domestic energy production, increased conservation and efficiency standards, and robust research and development to expand the use and application of alternative energy sources.

This is why I introduced legislation this week aimed at securing America's Energy Independence over the next 15 years. It is no longer a question of 'if' we can do this – it is a question of 'will.'

Poll after poll shows that the American people favor Republican-led American energy production policies. And Democrat leaders know that if a vote to increase American energy production was permitted, it would handily pass.

But there is nothing common sense about the Democrats standing idly by – blocking the will of the American people – while working-class families continue to struggle with the pain at the pump and the growing burden high energy costs place on family budgets.

As part of the continued Republican-led efforts to increase American energy supply – efforts supported by over 70 percent of Americans – I offered a discharge petition to force a vote on Democrat Congressman Rick Boucher of Virginia's and fellow Illinois Republican Congressman John Shimkus' coal-to-liquid promotion bill. This legislation would not only have tremendous impact on my home state of Illinois, but the entire nation.

This is a common sense approach to bring down the price at the pump and wean America off foreign oil. America, after all, is the Saudi Arabia of coal. In fact, according the Energy Department, our reserves represent over a quarter of the world's entire coal supply. This is enough to last well beyond the year 2200. It is mindless for us to not use the abundant amounts of coal that we have to our advantage.

Cutting edge technologies have allowed us to utilize coal's diverse potentials. Not only are we using coal in cleaner and more environmentally sound methods, but importantly, we can turn coal into gasoline and diesel. Our military is heavily invested in using coal-to-liquid

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- Yes, but I'm trying to save them
- Yes, and they are a lost cause
- ○No

technologies for jet fuel, so there is also a major national security element in this source of energy.

Not only will the development of coal-to-liquid and environmentally friendly sequestration technologies increase our energy security, but these advancements will also help create better, higher-paying American jobs.

In order to compete in the global economy, with China and India playing growing roles, we must get serious about harnessing our own resources, especially our abundant coal reserves in newer and cleaner forms.

The Boucher-Shimkus bill will allow us do to just that.

More coal-to-liquid means more energy and a stronger economy

We must commit ourselves to an "all of the above" energy approach, with a major focus on increasing domestic production and expanding alternatives fuels, while increasing efficiency and conservation standards.

This is a common goal to all Americans – Republican and Democrat.

The time to act is now. My Republican colleagues and I – along with many rank-and-file Democrats, and a clear majority of the American people – will continue to demand that Speaker Pelosi allow a vote on these efforts before Congress adjourns in August.